

Northampton. Saturday night -  
11 o'clock - Jan. 16th -  
[1841?]

My dear friend,

The Spirit says: 'Write to Mrs R. - write the history of the day to somebody that you would like to run in & tell it to, somebody who can enjoy it with you'. But is it not odd that your clerical friend, your bounden drudge to the never ceasing craft of sermon-writing, should have time to indite a letter Saturday night, as if there were no Christian nights in the week for that purpose? - & he too, that luckless J. S. D., who per time immemorial has performed mysterious solitary expiation ~~all~~ that (Saturday) night for a ~~week's~~ <sup>snatched away, for that vast of time,</sup> ~~per~~ <sup>per</sup> mortal sight, like Faust when Mephistopheles claimed him after having let him run full long. But this night I am free; the wherefore will appear ~~only~~ in the course of this most quaint & pleasant history.

I have had a strange day to break the monotony of life - one with little event - one of which the story will sound small & not worth the telling, - but more memorable than an eclipse in the inward calendar. Last night was leaghtened out with dreams; among which two long & connected ones remain with some distinctness in my mind (strange, for I never dream anything connected - stranger yet that my head should contain room for such absurdities) - ~~One~~ was a long confab with Lowell Mason, to whom I worked my way through a great crowd in a church at some literary per-



performance, as he sat in a sort of professional chair  
behind the stage - when I saw and him in that crowd  
God knows - We discussed the musical wants of the  
community at great length - The other end of meeting  
Queen Victoria & her Prince as common visitors in a  
board's house in Boston where I found myself being  
just as I was stepping aboard a steamer boat to Port  
land - They persuaded me to postpone my journey  
& pass a variable evening with them, trying in place  
of my friends - He was my leg & was necessary  
and. I awake exhausted & weary - After a rather  
oil-salt breakfast prepared to begin upon the  
morning - but not till I had read some few  
Ben Jonson, for I always hang off from that book  
while my mind desires any book for an excuse.  
But finally I did begin cheerfully. The beautiful  
fell around the paper - the mountains & the valley  
were added in parent mass - all the trees with  
~~the~~ all their tumps & branches clad with ice,  
plitted previously & the beauty of winter ~~there~~  
and me whenever my eye looked off from the  
task. The thoughts began to flow, the subjects  
to open before me, stills winter beyond winter, like  
a bounteous magnificent interior of a temple,  
& I, as happy as an artist in full tide of creation,  
began to execute the temple plan beginning, I scarce  
thinking that not twenty-five hours remained till  
Sunday - when in course the little West Indian



sell you the Elashes' or the 'bells' bringing me the most  
beautiful bouquet of green-house flowers I ever  
saw, together with a pot of English violets of most  
delicate fragrance - They filled my room with perfume  
& sat there in the middle of my table in the pale  
sunlight and a little of books, and there when I  
could not think of reading, to whom poor Homer  
often's offer sincere power, Shakespeare, Coleridge,  
Goethe &c - and was laid I most grateful ac-  
quaintance around me in my work - All day I  
wrote, but in alarm I looked at over the vast  
temple work was completed, no, not more than  
just begun - Sunday meanwhile eating or apace -  
It was not that my dinner I'd not pass, but  
my subject grew so much faster - I had piled  
up a hard little thought - but ~~the~~ like the  
casket picked up by the old man in the dra-  
been tale, when I opened it forth rolled up &  
up a cloud of smoke, which became a giant of  
most appalling stature, & made me wish my  
casket in the sea again - So was I terrified,  
But faith came to my aid! "The night is in de-  
votedly lay - thou cannot do impossible things - or  
at least try - think of Abraham willing to sacrifice  
his son - did not God send him a ram in-  
stead? So I worked on - my horizon still be-  
ing before me - till I was weary & dizzy - &  
resolved to run out, just after dark, & breathe



rare disco," telling me how glad I ought to be if a stray  
brother should offer to preach <sup>for</sup> me, & actually making me that  
offer, signed J. F. Clarke, Mission House. So was my  
diligence rewarded, my ~~distress~~ despair seen of Heaven &  
relieved - & now Good night! Yours J. S. D.

Will you not write me by Mr Huntington?

J. S. D. to Mrs. Ripley

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awhile - I run in to chat with some lady friends, seek-  
ing relief in something the most opposite to my work,  
they gave it me, in (will you believe it?) a pipe  
of whist, which I enjoyed most rarely, feeling as if  
had got a thousand miles away from the region I had  
all day occupied. After a brief refreshment in this odd  
way I hastened home, in faith & yet in terror, to my  
formidable task. She was handed me a note, com-  
mencing with the motto: "Raud Ephorus mali, miseris succur-